

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAENSIS





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/Stinner1965>

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ANIMAL METAPHORS IN VERGIL

by

Norbert Stinner

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

August 11, 1965

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and that they recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance the thesis entitled Animal Metaphors in Vergil, that had been submitted by Norbert Stinner in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

P R E F A C E

The object of this thesis is to present seven examples of Vergil's animal imagery. Two of these - the bull and the snake - have been treated in some detail. I have attempted to show that the bull is the nucleus of an extended metaphor that involves first Turnus and then, through him, stands for the whole of early Italy. Further attempts have been made to illuminate the manifold image that the snake assumes. The remaining five animals, the eagle, the tiger, the horse, the lion and the wolf, have been treated much more briefly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

I. The Bull as Turnus	page 1
II. The Bull as Italy	9

PART II

I. The Hidden Snake, a Threat to the Unwary	21
II. The Snake as Harm and Evil	22
III. The Double Snake as a Symbol of Death and Destruction	23
IV. The Snake Representing Strength and Vigour	27
V. The Snake as a Benevolent Force	29
VI. The Snake Imagery of Aeneid, Book II	33

PART III

I. The Eagle	39
II. The Tiger	40
III. The Horse	41
IV. The Lion	45
V. The Wolf	47

PART IV

I. Summary and Conclusions	51
List of Vergilian Quotations	58
Bibliography	60

ABBREVIATIONS

B.G. -- Bellum Gallicum

Caes. -- Caesar

Cael. -- Caelius

Carm. -- Carmina

Cic. -- Cicero

Dion., Hal. -- Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Div. -- Divinatio

Ep. -- Epistles

Epod. -- Epodes

Fab. -- Fabulae

Hes. -- Hesiod

Hor. -- Horace

Hyg. -- Hyginus

Lael. -- Laelius

Liv. -- Livy

Lucr. -- Lucretius

Met. -- Metamorphoses

Ov. -- Ovid

Plin. -- Pliny

R.E. -- Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft

Theog. -- Theogony

Val. Fl. -- Valerius Flaccus

Val. Max. -- Valerius Maximus

PART I: THE BULL

In Georgics Book III Vergil deals with the raising of domestic animals: cattle, sheep and goats.

After spending the first two hundred lines in introducing his topic and in discussing the breeding and raising of cattle and horses, the author devotes some eighty lines¹ to a description of the power of physical passion. Various animals--the horse, the lioness, the boar and even the human youth--are pictured caught in the throes of love; but the lengthiest and most vividly fascinating description is devoted to the bull. Vergil does it in thirty-nine lines.

"Atque ideo tauros procul atque in sola relegant
Pascua post montem oppositum et trans flumina lata,
Aut intus clausos satura ad praesepia servant.
Carpit enim vires paulatim uritque videndo
Femina, nec nemorum patitur meminisse nec herbae
(Dulcibus illa quidem inlecebris), et saepe superbos
Cornibus inter se subigit decernere amantes.
Pascitur in magna Sila formosa iuvenca:
Illi alternantes multa vi proelia miscent
Volneribus crebris; lavit ater corpora sanguis,
Versaque in obnixos urguntur cornua vasto
Cum gemitu; reboant silvaeque et longus Olympus.
Nec mos bellantes una stabulare, sed alter
Victus abit longeque ignotis exsulat oris,
Multa gemens ignominiam plagasque superbi
Victoris, tum, quos amisit inultus, amores;
Et stabula aspectans regnis excessit avitis.
Ergo omni cura vires exercet et inter
Dura iacet pernox instrato saxa cubili
Fronibus hirsutis et carice pastus acuta,
Et temptat sese, atque irasci in cornua discit
Arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque laccessit
Ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit harena.
Post ubi collectum robur viresque refectione,
Signa movet, praecepsque oblitum fertur in hostem;
Fluctus uti, medio coepit cum albescere ponto,
Longius ex altoque sinum trahit, utque volutus
Ad terras immane sonat per saxa, neque ipso
Monte minor procumbit, at ima exaestuatur unda
Vorticibus nigramque alte subiectat harenam."²

¹ Georgics, III, 209-283

² Ibid., 212-241

This passage has parallels in two passages of the Aeneid and through them contributes significantly to the over-all picture of Turnus. How closely Vergil drew upon the above quoted selection is shown by:

"Mugitus veluti cum prima in proelia taurus
Terrificos ciet atque irasci in cornua temptat,
Arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque laccessit
Ictibus, aut sparsa ad pugnam proludit harena."³

and by:

"Illi inter sese multa vi volnera miscent"⁴

The first of the two above is a simile describing Turnus as he is preparing for single combat with Aeneas. The second relates the actual encounter between the two. Vergil has on several other occasions used a device illustrated in the first of these quotations.⁵ The device consists of converting a descriptive or narrative passage into a simile. This means that if for example the author intends to describe someone by means of an animal simile, he will borrow the description of some animal found previously among his writing and incorporate it into a simile.

Although Vergil borrows lines from his own work, he often makes changes in them. In line 104 Book XII he has changed the original discit to temptat. Such changes are sometimes significant and necessary in the new environment to which the lines have been transplanted. Sometimes the changes are made merely for the sake of variety as if the poet were embarrassed to copy verbatim without thinking as it were. Although the latter may have occurred here, there is also a good reason why Vergil

³ Aeneid, XII, 103-106

⁴ Ibid., 720

⁵ Georgics, I, 304--Aeneid, IV, 418; Georgics, IV, 171-175--Aeneid, VIII, 449-453; Georgics, III, 437-439--Aeneid, II, 473-475.

changed discit to temptat. In the Georgics the bull has gone into self-imposed exile during which he plans revenge and trains himself for the intended second encounter with his rival. He has time to learn (discit). The bull in Aeneid XII, is shown just previous to the fight. He does not have time to learn to throw into his horns his wrath; therefore, he tries to do it in the time available.

We have seen how indebted the lines 103-106 of Book XII are to the passage quoted from the Georgics. Lines 715-724 of Book XII are equally indebted to this passage. They constitute a simile describing the encounter between Aeneas and Turnus.

"Ac velut ingenti Sila summove Taburno
Cum duo conversis inimica in proelia tauri
Frontibus incurrunt; pavidī cessere magistri;
Stat pecus omne metu mutum, mussantque iuvencae,
Quis nemori imperitet, quem tota armenta sequantur;
Illi inter sese multa vi volnera miscent,
Cornuaque obnixi infigunt, et sanguine largo
Colla armosque lavant; gemitu nemus omne remugit."

As will be seen, these lines are an expansion and intensification of Georgics III, lines 220-223,

"Illi alternantes multa vi proelia miscent
Volneribus crebris; lavit ater corpora sanguis,
Versaque in obnixos urgentur cornua vasto
Cum gemitu; reboant silvaeque et longus Olympus."

Servius betrays insufficient understanding of the parallelism of these two passages when he reads magna silva instead of magna Sila in Georgics III.⁶ The passage in the Aeneid is so obviously based on that in Georgics that this alone argues strongly for magna Sila.⁷ Another reason why silva is highly improbable is that Vergil displays a thorough knowledge

⁶ Servius, In Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica Commentarii, (Ed. Thilo), p. 294

⁷ Since we must read Sila in Aeneid XII because summove Taburno follows

of livestock and farming on numerous occasions throughout the Georgics, and this knowledge would scarcely allow him to have cattle grazing in the midst of a forest. As mentioned above, lines 715-724 of Aeneid XII are an expansion and intensification of the lines 220-223 of Georgics III. Expansion is achieved by expressing in six lines in the Aeneid what was expressed in four in the Georgics.

Intensification the poet achieves by the method mentioned above that of making certain changes in borrowed lines. Thus one can see that although the vocabulary is similar in great part,⁸ certain changes have been made. Alternantes has been changed to inter sese, proelia to vulnera, reboant to remugit. The change from reboant to remugit, I believe, serves no greater purpose than that mentioned above, i.e. variety. Inter sese, however, implies a closer physical contact than alternantes. Alterno means to do something by turns; one of the definitions of inter is "to express all reciprocal relations, among, with, or between one another; mutually together (especially with pronouns)."⁹ Inter sese thus pictures the two struggling figures interlocked in deadly fight. Similarly vulnera makes the physical violence much more immediate than proelia, because of vivid particularization. The reason for this expansion is quite obvious. The poet is here dealing not merely with a struggle between two animals fighting for a female, but with the final climactic struggle between Aeneas and Turnus. The fate of Italy is at stake; the fulfilment of the divine prophecy regarding the future of the Trojan race, i.e. the Roman race hinges on the outcome of this combat.

⁸ cornuaque = cornua; obnixi = obnixos; sanguine = sanguis; lavant = lavit; gemitu = gemitu

⁹ Lewis and Short, s.v. "inter", p. 976

As can be seen from the three quoted passages above, Vergil is attempting to establish a connection between the bull and Turnus. It will be seen later that this comparison is highly significant.

The bull, however, is not the only animal to which Vergil compares Turnus. He is compared also to a wolf, a tiger, a lion, a wild stallion; clearly all the animals to which Turnus is compared have one conspicuous characteristic in common--violence. As Pöschl says, "Turnus' fury in battle is repeatedly illustrated by reference to wild animals, while Aeneas is compared to a beast of prey only once."¹⁰

This exception occurs in Book II. Aeneas has just been awakened from sleep to the horrible realization that Troy has been invaded and is about to be sacked. Joined by some companions he resolves to rush into the enemy in a last desperate attempt,

"inde, lupi ceu raptores atra in nebula, quos
improba ventris exegit caecos rabies catulique
relicti faucibus expectant siccis, per tela,
per hostes vadimur haud dubiam in mortem."¹¹

Pöschl correctly points out, "The subject matter of the simile is not so much the beasts' bloodthirstiness as their expectation of death, their desperate hunger pangs and instinctive drive to care for the young they left behind."¹²

Contrast the animal similes used for Turnus. He is compared to a wolf as he rides around the Trojan camp terrifying the Trojans inside

¹⁰ V. Pöschl, The Art of Vergil, (Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 98

¹¹ Aeneid, II, 355-359

¹² V. Pöschl, op. cit., p. 98

who are cowed by Aeneas' absence;

"Ac veluti pleno lupo insidiatus ovili
Cum fremit ad caulas, ventos perpressus et imbres,
Nocte super media: tuti sub matribus agni
Balatum exercent; ille asper et improbus ira
Saevit in absentes: collecta fatigat edendi
Ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces"¹³

he is compared to an eagle or a wolf as he seizes the unfortunate Lycus and tears him down from the wall which Lycus has climbed in a vain effort to escape Turnus' fury;

"Qualis ubi aut leporem aut candenti corpore cycnum
Sustulit alta petens pedibus Iovis armiger uncis,
Quaesitum aut matri multis balatibus agnum
Martius a stabulis rapuit lupo."¹⁴

he is compared to a tiger, when Pandarus, by shutting the gate which he and his brother had opened, unwittingly encloses Turnus in the Trojan camp;

"Immanem veluti pecora inter inertia tigrim"¹⁵

he is compared to a lion when he is finally forced to abandon the Trojan camp by the combined Trojan bands;

"...Ceum saevum turba leonem
Cum telis premit infensus; at territus ille,
Asper, acerba tuens, retro redit, et neque terga
Ira dare aut virtus patitur, nec tendere contra
(Ille quidem hoc cupiens) potis est per tela virosque"¹⁶

and as he catches sight of Pallas and is about to engage him in combat;

"...Utque leo, specula quum vidit ab alta
Stare procul campis meditantem in proelia taurum,
Advolat;"¹⁷

again as he beholds the Latins beaten and broken in spirit, and senses their

¹³ Aeneid, IX, 59-64

¹⁴ Ibid., 563-566

¹⁵ Ibid., 730

¹⁶ Ibid., 792-796

¹⁷ Aeneid, X, 454-456

dissatisfaction with his leadership;

"...Poenorum qualis in arvis
Saucius ille gravi venantum volnere pectus
Tum demum movet arma leo, gaudetque comantes
Excutiens cervice toros, fixumque latronis
Inpavidus frangit telum, et fremit ore cruento"¹⁸

he is compared to a wild stallion when, putting on his armour to meet the enemy, he rushes down from the citadel to take charge of the coming encounter;

"Qualis ubi abruptis fugit praesepia vinclis
Tandem liber equus, campoque potitus aperto
Aut ille in pastus armentaque tendit equarum,
Aut adsuetus aquae perfundi flumine noto
Emicat, arrectisque fremit cervicibus alte
Luxurians; luduntque iubae per colla, per armos."¹⁹

By means of these similes in which Turnus is compared to various wild animals, Vergil attempts to characterize Turnus as "the personification of demonic forces,"²⁰ as Pöschl says. Indeed the strength, fighting spirit and pride of the lion, the energy and fieriness of the wild stallion, the fierceness and bloodthirstiness of the tiger and wolf admirably bring out Turnus' fury in battle.

However, to repeat the statement made earlier, the comparison between the bull and Turnus is significant. The question might be raised: is the wolf not equally significant or perhaps more so, since in addition to illustrating Turnus' fierceness it was one of the important cult animals of early Italy and thus would accord well with Vergil's portrayal of Turnus as the representation of early Italy? It is true that the wolf appears in early Italy as a cult animal;²¹ nevertheless as Rome grew in importance among the

¹⁸ Aeneid, XII, 4-8

¹⁹ Aeneid, XI, 492-497

²⁰ V. Pöschl, op. cit., p. 99

²¹ F. Altheim, A History of Roman Religion,

cities of Italy, the wolf--being an integral part of Rome's founding myth--became increasingly associated with Rome. Therefore the image of the wolf as the primary animal symbol of Rome would override the image of the wolf as a symbol of early Italy in the mind of Vergil's Roman readers. To the Roman reader the bull would far more vividly represent Turnus, the early Italian hero, than would the wolf, since the connection of the bull and Italy, as opposed to the wolf and Rome, was firmly established to Vergil's contemporaries, as will be seen later.

There are two bull-Turnus parallels that strike the attention immediately. Both Turnus and the bull as described in Georgics III have suffered humiliation in love at the hands of their rivals. The bull has just been defeated by a rival animal during a struggle for the affections of a heifer. Deeply humiliated he goes into exile, mourning his shameful defeat, nursing his wrath, his thoughts fixed on revenge. Turnus has just seen Aeneas preferred to him as chief prospective husband for Lavinia, and, like the bull, he is filled with humiliation and rage seeking revenge with a demonic single-mindedness of purpose. At the sight of the Italian casualties suffered during the first encounter between the Trojans and the Italians, he cries out in a rage and wounded pride that,

"...Teucros in regna vocari;
Stirpem admisceri Phrygiam; se limine pelli."²²

Again, before the camp of the Trojans, Turnus shouts,

"...Sunt et mea contra
Fata mihi, ferro sceleratam exscindere gentem,
Coniuge praerepta."²³

²² Aeneid, VII, 578-579

²³ Aeneid, IX, 136-138

Both Turnus and the bull are contending for an attractive prize. The heifer in the life of the bull is called a formosa invenca. When we are first introduced to Lavinia, we are told that her hand is sought by many suitors.

"Sola domum et tantas servabat filia sedes,
Iam matura viro, iam plenis nubilis annis.
Multi illam magno e Latio totaque petebant
Ausonia."²⁴

Lavinia's beauty emerges on two occasions as she is described when she listens to her mother's entreaty to Turnus and when she hears the news of her mother's death.²⁵

If, as Pöschl says, Turnus represents Italy in its original power,²⁶ the most significant and interesting reason for representing him by a bull becomes apparent. To wit: the bull represents Italy.

To the ancients the connection did not seem strange. Varro has this to say,

"Graecia...antiqua tauros vocaret
a quorum multitudine et pulchritudine et foetu
vitulorum Italiam dixerunt."²⁷

Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites an old legend which tells us that, as Hercules was driving the oxen of Geryon through Italy on his way to Argos, a young bull ran away from the main herd and swam to Sicily via the Straits of Messina. Hercules pursued the animal and asked those whom he met whether they had seen it. The Sicilians whose knowledge of Greek was limited called

²⁴ Aeneid, VII, 52-55

²⁵ Aeneid, XII, 64-66; 605-606

²⁶ V. Pöschl, op. cit., p. 96

²⁷ Varro, De re rustica 2.5.3.

the animal οὐίτουλογ (vitulum), and consequently the whole country which the bull had traversed came to be known as Οὐίτουλίαν 28

Servius says,

"alii Italiam a bubus quibus est Italia fertilis,
quia Graeci boves ἱταλους nos vitulos dicimus."29

Franz Altheim sums up this ancient view and voices his own opinion,

"Over the etymology (of Italy) too, the ancients were quite clear. They referred it to an old word ἱταλος or ἱτυλος 'head of cattle'; occasionally a definite Tyrrhenian, that is to say, antive Italian origin was assigned to it. Comparison with Latin vitulus umbr. vitlu, vitluf, vitlup, forces itself on the notice and Oscan viteliu 'Italia' brings confirmation. It is simply the 'land of cattle'. Root and meaning recur again and again in the native names. As vitellius is related to vitulus, so are the divine ancestors of the Vitellii, the Vitellia and the Latin city of the same name connected with the same context. The word reached Rome in the Greek form Italia (Ἰταλία) and the uncertainty over the quantity of the first syllable points to a foreign intermediary."30

Altheim rejects Servius' "a bubus quibus est Italia fertilis" on the ground that the country did not possess sufficient pasture land to warrant such an explanation. He believes, that

"Italia, Ἰταλία, linguistically considered denotes the land of the Itali, Ἰταλοί as the supposed derivation ἀπὸ τοῦ δυναστεύδαντος Ἰταλοῦ really expresses. We cannot then escape the conclusion that the inhabitants after whom the land was called styled themselves cattle."31

Altheim then proceeds to attempt to explain the connection Italy = Bull by "native Italian" conceptions. He does this by bringing in the God Mars.32

28 Dion., Hal., R. A. 1.35

29 Servius, In Vergilii Carmina Commentarii, (Ed. Thilo), p. 163

30 F. Altheim, op. cit., pp. 65-66

31 Ibid., p. 66

32 Ibid., p. 66

The bull along with the wolf and the woodpecker were closely related to and represented the god Mars.³³ Furthermore, at the ver sacrum youths born in a certain year were driven beyond the frontiers by their community as a sacrifice to Mars;³⁴ whenever this happened, the bull in addition to the wolf and the woodpecker would appear beside them as their leader.³⁵ That is the reason for the Samnites' calling their city Bovianum after the bull that led them.³⁶ The Itali, therefore, are named after the bull just as the Picenti are named after Picus the woodpecker.³⁷ Altheim continues,

"just as the 'young woodpeckers' named themselves after the woodpecker of Mars (Picus Martius) or after the god 'Woodpecker' (Picus), so those men, we must suppose, called themselves after the bull of Mars or after the bull-god Mars himself."³⁸

That, according to Altheim, is the origin of the Gens Vitellia, for example. The fact that these Vitelli appear as descendants of Faunus, and that Faunus belongs to the circle of Mars, supports the vituli-Mars connection.³⁹ Altheim cites a geneology from Hesiod and Hyginus to strengthen his assertion. According to Hesiod, the children of Odysseus and Circe were Agrios, Faunus, and Telegonus;⁴⁰ according to Hyginus this same Telegonus had a son by the name of Italus.⁴¹

³³ Ibid., p. 66

³⁴ Ibid., p. 66

³⁵ Ibid., p. 66

³⁶ Ibid., p. 66

³⁷ Ibid., p. 67

³⁸ Ibid., p. 67

³⁹ Ibid., p. 67

⁴⁰ Hes., Theog. 1101

⁴¹ Hyg., Fab. 127

The assertion that Vergil intended the bull to represent Italy and that he was not alone in the belief that the bull and Italy were connected does not postulate a complete agreement with Altheim's theory as stated above.

Gustav Hermansen, for example, has shown convincingly that the bull (and the wolf) were not necessarily always connected with the God Mars.⁴² To wit: the bull could have been worshipped as an independent deity in his own right. This means that the bull was on occasion the sole leader (without Mars) of those driven out to found a new city during the ver sacrum. Bovianum, therefore, according to Hermansen was not necessarily founded under the auspices of Mars.⁴³

Be that as it may; what is important for our purposes is: For the ancient reader the connection between the bull and Italy was beyond dispute. The most convincing testimony for this is furnished by numismatic evidence. During the Social War the rebellious Italians minted their own coins. One such coin depicts a bull trampling on a wolf; it is inscribed **VITELIU** (Viteliu = Italia).⁴⁴ The meaning is plain: the Italian bull is crushing the Roman wolf. Another coin shows on one side a head of Italia and beside it the inscription Viteliu; on the other side, a warrior is leaning on an upturned spear, his left foot resting on a Roman standard beside which a bull is resting.⁴⁵ Here, too, the symbolism is clear. Italia has triumphed; the Roman standards are toppled.

⁴² G. Hermansen, Studien über den Italischen und den Römischen Mars, (Copenhagen, 1940), p. 98

⁴³ Ibid., p. 100

⁴⁴ E. A. Sydenham, The Roman Republican Coinage, (London, 1952), p. 628

⁴⁵ G. Hermansen, op. cit., p. 105

One might well ask why Vergil gives us a different explanation of the origin of the name Italy. It occurs in Aeneid Book I when Ilioneus introduces his shipwrecked band to Dido and explains their intended destination;⁴⁶ the same passage occurs in Book III this time uttered by the household gods who appear to Aeneas in a dream while he is planning to consult the oracle at Delos about the Trojans' destination,

"Est locus (Hesperiam Grai cognomine dicunt)
Terra antiqua, potens armis atque ubere glaebae,
Oenotri coluere viri; nunc fama minores
Italiam dixisse ducis de nomine gentem."⁴⁷

Why did Vergil write this? It is absurd to postulate that he was ignorant of the Bull = Italy connection. The Social War had taken place too recently to have been forgotten by Vergil's generation; furthermore it does not strain probability to assume that the above mentioned coins were still in circulation. Does this mean that he deliberately tried to give a false interpretation of what was considered common knowledge? This is doubtful.

First of all, Vergil has no need of repressing a view that was commonly accepted. Secondly, Vergil has after all not denied the Italy = Bull connection by saying that the country is called Italy after a chieftain Italus--as a leader of the Itali could plausibly be called. Such a statement can safely be made by the author without denying that Itali means "bull-men".

Whence, then, did Vergil derive the above explanation and why did he give it?

⁴⁶ Aeneid, I, 530-533

⁴⁷ Aeneid, III, 163-166

Without a doubt he got it from Aristotle. The latter writes in his Politics,

" φασὶ γὰρ οἱ λόγιοι τῶν ἐκεῖ κατοικούντων
'Ιταλὸν τινα γενέσθαι βασιλέα τῆς Οἰνωτρίας,
'ἀφ' οὗ τότε ὄνομα μεταβαλόντας Ἰταλοὺς ἀντ'
Οἰνωτρῶν κληθῆναι καὶ τὴν ἀκτὴν ταύτην τῆς Εὐρώπης
'Ιταλίαν τοῦτομα λαβεῖν, ὅση τετύχηκεν ἐντὸς οὗσα
τοῦ κόλπου τοῦ Σκυλλητικοῦ καὶ τοῦ Λαμητικοῦ.
ἀπέχει γὰρ ταῦτα ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὁδὸν ἡμισείας
ἡμέρας

Why Vergil gave this explanation is more difficult to answer. I should like to suggest two chief reasons. First, Vergil was attracted by the great name of Aristotle and secondly, he wanted to arouse his reader's curiosity by putting forth a view different from the standard accepted one, without denying, as mentioned above, that standard view.

The fact that significant parallels exist between Turnus and the bull as well as between the bull and Italy, as will be seen next, argues strongly for Vergil's belief in the bull-Italy connection.

In addition to making the bull stand for Turnus, Vergil endows the animal with some of the same characteristics with which he endows early Italy.

The animal is pictured as strong, healthy, exuding the same primaeval lust for life that emanates from primitive Italy. Indeed when in Georgics III⁴⁹ Vergil describes a plague in the Italian countryside--a plague that

⁴⁸ Aristotle, Politics 1329 b 9

⁴⁹ Georgics, III, 478-566

carried off many kinds of animals--the only animal suffering during this plague that is described in detail is the bull. The centrepiece of the illustrations picturing the ravages of the plague is the extended portrait of a dying bull.⁵⁰ After describing the death of the animal and the animal's simple pleasures now abandoned forever, the author concludes with a eulogy of the animal: simplicity, hard work, and frugality characterized its life.

"Quid labor aut benefacta iuvant? quid vomere terras
Invertisse graves? atqui non Massica Bacchi
Munera, non illis epulae nocuere repostae:
Frondebis et victu pascuntur simplicis herbae,
Pocula sunt fontes liquidi atque exercita cursu
Flumina, nec somnos abruptit cura salubres."⁵¹

This same hardiness, simplicity and frugality emerges from the description of early Italy in the Aeneid.

Simplicity and frugality are emphasized in the Aeneas-Evander episode. Aeneas has come to Evander's city to seek help in the war against Turnus. Vergil lovingly dwells on the primitive site of Rome and Evander's humble cottage.

"Talibus inter se dictis ad tecta subibant
Pauperis Euandri, passimque armenta videbant
Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis.
Ut ventum ad sedes, 'Haec,' inquit, 'limina victor
'Alcides subiit, haec illum regia cepit.
'Aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum
'Finge deo, rebusque veni non asper egenis.'
Dixit, et angusti subter fastigia tecti
Ingentem Aenean duxit, stratisque locavit
Effultum foliis et pelle Libystidis ursae."⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., 515-517

⁵¹ Ibid., 525-530

⁵² Aeneid, VIII, 359-368

Evander has a "poor senate" (pauperque senatus);⁵³ his throne is made of maple (solioque...acerno).⁵⁴

In Book IX Numanus, the brother-in-law of Turnus taunts the Trojans who are locked in their camp awaiting the arrival of Aeneas; this is how he describes his race.

"Durum a stirpe genus natos ad flumina primum
Deferimus saevoque gelu duramus et undis.
Venatu invigilant pueri silvasque fatigant;
'Flectere ludus equos et spicula tendere cornu.
'At patiens operum parvoque adsueta iuventus
'Aut rastris terram domat aut quatit oppida bello.
'Omne aevom ferro teritur, versaque iuvenum
'Terga fatigamus hasta; nec tarda senectus
'Debilitat vires animi mutatque vigorem:
'Canitiem galea premimus, semperque recentes
'Comportare iuvat praedas et vivere rapto."⁵⁵

In Book V Anchises appears to Aeneas urging him to accept the advice of Nautes that he leave the old and the timorous in Sicily and set out for Italy with the pick of the brave only. He then goes on to describe the Italian race.

"Consiliis pare, quae nunc pulcherrima Nautes
'Dat senior: lectos iuvenes, fortissima corda,
'Defer in Italiam: gens dura atque aspera cultu
'Debellanda tibi Latio est."⁵⁶

Vergil uses the word durus to describe both the hardness of the Italians and the hard life of the bull. The Italians are called durum genus and dura gens, the bull dies in the midst of his toil--duro fumans sub vomere (line 515). Durus is also reminiscent of the defeated bull in lines 224-230 who goes into exile--inter dura iacet pernox instrato saxa cubile.

⁵³ Ibid., 105

⁵⁴ Ibid., 178

⁵⁵ Aeneid, IX, 603-613

⁵⁶ Aeneid, V, 728-731

We have seen how Vergil has utilized the passages in Georgics III, that deal with the bull in his creation of the overall image of Turnus, and subsequently of the image of early Italy that emerges from the Aeneid. The bull contributes to the picture of Italy in two ways: both through the bull-Turnus parallel (since Turnus represents early Italy), and through the independently established bull-Italy parallel.

PART II: THE SNAKE

One of the first things that strike the reader of Vergil is that the author is fascinated by snakes. This fascination is common to almost all ancient and primitive peoples. The various attributes of the snake--its silent movement, the suddenness with which it appears and disappears, its lightning-like attack--all contributed to the overall awe in which it was held. Most ancient and modern peoples independently have endowed the animal with religious awe.¹

No other animal is encountered more often in Vergil's pages. References to snakes in his works number at least fifty. To avoid the monotony of identical appellation, Vergil almost exhausts the Latin snake vocabulary. He uses eight words to refer to the animal: anguis, serpens, coluber, vipera, draco, hydrus, hydra, chelydrus. Exactly to what extent the Roman reader differentiated between these words we do not know. Servius distinguishes between anguis, serpens, and draco; however, his definitions indicate cursory judgment and faulty interpretation, although this is tempered by his concluding remark.

"Angues angues aquarum sunt, serpentes terrarum, dracones templorum, ut in hoc indicat loco 'tranquilla per alta angues', paulo post in terra 'serpens amplexus'; item 'delubra ad summa dracones': sed haec significatio plerumque confunditur."²

These distinctions are based on a misinterpretation of Vergil's usage in lines 205-225 of Aeneid Book II where Aeneas tells how Laocoon and his sons were killed by two serpents who swam across the water, slew their victims and then made their way to the temple of Athena. While they are swimming in the water, they are called anguis, on land, serpentes, and fleeing

¹ Hartmann, R. E., III, (1921), s.v. "Schlange", p. 509

² Servius, In Vergilii Carmina Commentarii, (Ed. Thilo), p. 254.

to the temple they are called dracones. Servius, however, is surely wrong in his distinction because, first of all, the same two snakes only are involved, and they cannot be water snakes and land snakes simultaneously; secondly, even if Servius means that whenever snakes are in the water they are called angues, whenever they are on land they are called serpentes, and whenever they are near a temple, dracones, he has not read other authors who do not follow these distinctions, nor Vergil for that matter, who makes no such distinctions and uses the terms anguis, serpens, coluber, draco indiscriminately, as shown below.

Vergil's usage differs somewhat from that of other Roman writers. An examination of Roman literature from Lucretius to Pliny the Elder reveals that although Latin had no single word meaning snake in general (like the English word "snake" or the German, "Schlange"), the words serpens and anguis were used when no reference to a particular species was intended.

Thus Lucretius uses serpens when he refers to a snake in general,³ Cicero uses both serpens and anguis⁴ (he also uses draco when he wants to refer to a snake of large size)⁵ Similarly Horace uses both anguis and serpens;⁶ Livy uses anguis predominantly;⁷ Pliny uses both anguis and serpens⁸ (the latter much more frequently).

³ Lucr., 4.60, "et item cum lubrica serpens exuit in spinis vestem."
5.32-33, "aureaque Hesperidum servans fulgentia mala, asper, acerba tuens,
immani corpore serpens"

⁴ Cic., Div. I, 36; Div. II, 62; Div. I, 79; Div. I, 72.

⁵ Cic., Div. II, 63.

⁶ Hor., Carm. 3.10.18; Ep. 1.17.30; Epod. 1.20.

⁷ Liv., 41.21.13.

⁸ Plin., N.H. 8.14.36; 30.12.37

Pliny uses draco to refer to a distinct species of snake⁹, probably a python. This usage is similar to Cicero's who, as mentioned above, uses draco to mean a large snake.

Pliny, furthermore, on occasion uses both anguis and serpens in the same passage to refer to the same snake, as in 29.20.67.

"in orbe terrarum pulcherrimum anguium genus est quod et
in aqua vivit, hydri vocantur, nullo serpentium inferiores
veneno."

Here both anguis and serpens clearly refer to the same snake.¹⁰ Ovid follows the same procedure in his metamorphoses.¹¹

Vergil was the first to adopt the practice of using two names to refer to the same snake; furthermore he is unique among the authors cited above in that, in addition to the two words serpens and anguis, he uses two more, draco and coluber, to refer to a snake in general; and in that he sometimes uses three words to refer to the same snake. We have seen how draco is used to mean large snake by Cicero and Pliny; Vergil, however, uses it simply as a synonym of anguis and serpens. Coluber, with the exception of Lucretius, Valerius Flaccus, Ovid, Columella, and Lucan, is found mainly in late Latin writers; in Vergil, along with draco, it is a synonym of anguis and serpens.

⁹ Plin., op. cit., 29.20.67. "Draco non habet venena".

¹⁰ W. H. S. Jones, Pliny, Natural History (London, 1963) tries to show that there is a distinction between serpens and anguis in this chapter, because of the juxtaposition of "neque anguis" with "a serpente" in the passage, "Praeterea constat contra omnium ictus quamvis insanabiles ipsarum serpentium exta inposita auxiliari, eosque qui aliquando viperae iecur coctum hauserint numquam postea feriri a serpente. neque anguis venenatus est nisi per mensem luna instigatus". However, this is not sufficient grounds to establish a connection. Even if it were, it would not change the fact that the two words are used completely interchangeably above.

¹¹ Ov., Met., 4.575-585. Cadmus prays to be changed into a serpent-- "ipse precor serpens in longam porrigar alvum", and ten lines later, as the metamorphosis is taking place, he says, "accipe dum manus est, dum non totum occupat anguis."

Thus, in Aeneid Book XI we find both draco and serpens applied to the same snake;¹² in Book VII the same snake is called anguis, serpens and coluber;¹³ and in Book II (the passage mentioned above) anguis, serpens and draco are applied to the same two snakes that killed Laocoon and his sons.

Why did Vergil use four names to refer to snakes in general? Three reasons can be suggested: to achieve variety, as a metrical expediency, and to achieve an abstract concept of "snake". By using draco synonymously with anguis and serpens, he has obliterated the specialized meaning of draco; since coluber is used synonymously with anguis and serpens, as well, Vergil expresses the concept "snake" in four words.

The following is an attempt to catalogue and examine the various roles played by the snake in the works of Vergil.

The snake as a lurking danger in itself illustrates perhaps the most universally known aspect of the animal. It is represented as a hidden evil, a threat to the unwary. This characteristic of insidiousness represents the common conception of snakes, as in the English expression "a snake in the grass."

We find this characteristic in the Eclogue III, where the lines

"qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga
frigidus, o pueri, fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba."¹⁴

In Georgics III the farmer is advised to protect his flocks against natural enemies such as snakes. The snake is again represented as hiding menacingly:

"saepe sub inmotis praesepibus aut mala tactu
vipera delituit caelumque exterrita fugit,
aut tecto adsuetus coluber succedere et umbrae,
pestis acerba boum, pecorique adspergere virus,
fovit humum."¹⁵

¹² Aeneid, XI, 751-755

¹³ Aeneid, VII, 346-375

¹⁴ Eclogue, III, 92-93

¹⁵ Georgics, III, 416-420

Vergil is probably referring to two snakes here, vipera referring to a specific type of snake.

After describing the hungry snake on the rampage for food, Vergil admirably suggests its hostile presence by implication.

"ne mihi tum molles sub divo carpere somnos
neu dorso nemoris libeat iacuisse per herbas."16

The snake that kills Eurydice is also hiding in the grass.

"illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina praeceps,
inmanem ante pedes hydram moritura puella
servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba."17

The hidden snake motif is best exemplified by a masterful simile in Aeneid Book II. During the invasion of Troy, Androgeos, mistaking Aeneas and his companions for fellow Greeks, approaches too close and realizes too late that he is trapped. He is compared to a man who accidentally steps on a snake hidden in some thorn bushes.

"obstipuit, retroque pedem cum voce repressit.
inprovisum aspris veluti qui sentibus anguem
pressit humi nitens, trepidusque repente refugit
attollentem iras, et caerula colla tumentem."18

The simile is reminiscent of the one in Iliad III, where Paris' feelings are described when he sees Menelaus coming towards him. It may have influenced Vergil.

" ὥς δ' ὅτε τις τε δράκοντα ἰδὼν παλίνορος ἀπέστη
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσης, ὑπὸ τε τρόμος ἔλλαβε γυῖα,
ἄψ δ' ἀνεχώρησεν, ὥχρος τέ μιν εἶλε παρειῶς " 19

Vergil describes the unexpected by the two words inprovisum and repente.

Closely related to the lurking danger motif is the snake as a representation of evil.

16 Ibid., 435-436

17 Georgics, IV, 456-458

18 Aeneid, II, 378-381

19 Iliad, III, 33-35

Vergil's Golden Age described in Eclogue IV is characterized by an absence of snakes.

"ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.
occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
occidet..."²⁰

It is interesting to note how the prophet Isaiah conceives of a similar golden age--"and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp."²¹

The snake that the fury Allecto²² places in Amata's bosom represents evil and causes frenzied rage in its victim.

"huic dea caeruleis unum de crinibus anguem
conicit, inque sinum praecordia ad intima subdit,
quo furibunda domum monstro permisceat omnem.
ille inter vestes et levia pectora lapsus
volvitur attactu nullo, fallitque furem,
vipeream inspirans animam; fit tortile collo
aurum ingens coluber, fit longae taenia vittae,
innectitque comas, et membris lubricus errat.
ac dum prima lues udo sublapsa veneno
pertemptat sensus atque ossibus implicat ignem."²³

As Servius aptly points out, the serpent here represents madness; the madness and frenzy of Allecto herself who is Frenzy personified. By placing one of her snakes in Amata's bosom, she infects Amata with her own poison.

"'anguem' autem iniecit partem sui, id est furoris"²⁴

Another example of the snake as a symbol of evil is the one where twin snakes represent death and destruction. This motif is most convincingly illustrated in Aeneid VIII, during the lengthy description of Aeneas' shield made for him by Vulcan and emblazoned with designs depicting the significant

²⁰ Eclogue, IV, 21-25

²¹ Isaiah, 11.8

²² Allecto herself, as one of the evil beings known as furies, is described as having the traditional snakes in her hair (Aen. VII, 329), "tot pullulat atra colubris".

²³ Aeneid, VII, 346-355

²⁴ Servius, op. cit., p. 154

events in Rome's history. A particularly vivid portrayal of the Battle of Actium includes these lines about Cleopatra:

"regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina sistro;
necdum etiam geminos a tergo respicit angues"²⁵

Since Cleopatra was killed by one snake (an asp), why does Vergil say geminos angues? The problem was a thorn in the flesh of commentators from the time of Servius who had this to say about the problem,

"traditur enim ne ad triumphum Augusti reservaretur,
admota sibi aspide defecisse. tum 'geminos',
cum unum sibi admoverit."²⁶

to that of Mackail who goes to absurd lengths in his attempts to solve it.²⁷

The credit for the sensible explanation that the twin snakes symbolize impending disaster and death, and do not represent the actual mode of Cleopatra's death, goes to Henry.²⁸ Henry conceived of "disaster and death" as one unit. However, had he looked more closely, he would have seen that the twin serpents represent two connected ideas, one of them death.

²⁵ Aeneid VIII, 696-697

²⁶ Servius, op cit., p. 302

²⁷ J. W. Mackail, Aeneid, (London, 1957), p. 237 "The serpents of course symbolize Cleopatra's death, but why there are a pair of them and why they are said to be behind her (unless a tergo merely means awaiting her in the near future) is not clear. Possibly in portraits of Cleopatra in the dress of the goddess Isis, with which Vergil must have been familiar, some confusion may have arisen with the twin horns which rise on the head-dress, with the disc of the moon between them. In the celebrated Denders portrait of Cleopatra, these horns are shaped not unlike serpents and she is looking away from them.

²⁸ J. Henry, Aeneidea, Vol. III, (London, 1873), p. 775

Thus, the two snakes behind Cleopatra represent the disaster and defeat of her forces, as well as her own death. The twin snakes that Allecto raises high on her head and bids Turnus look at portend wars and death.

"...geminos erexit crinibus angues,
verberaque insonuit, rabidoque haec addidit ore:
'en, ego, victa situ, quam veri effeta senectus
arma inter regum falsa formidine ludit;
respice ad haec; adsum dirarum ab sede sororum;
bella manu letumque gero.'"29

The snakes portend both the wars between the Italians and the Trojans, and the death of Turnus in battle.

Similarly, the gemini angues (whose further symbolism will be discussed below) that swim across the water from Tenedos and destroy Laocoon symbolize the impending destruction of Troy and the death of Laocoon.³⁰

Henry does not mention examples of the two snakes as a death symbol in other authors; however, the same motif occurs in Valerius Maximus who relates the following story about Tiberius Gracchus.

"Minus miram in homine parum considerato temeritatem Ti. Gracchi gravissimi civis tristis exitus et prodigio denuntiatus nec evitatus consilio facit: consul enim cum in Lucanis sacrificaret, angues duae ex occulto prolapsae repente hostiae, quam immolaverat, adeso iecinore in easdem se latebras retulerunt. ob id deinde factum instaurato sacrificio idem prodigiii evenit. tertia quoque caesa victima diligentiusque adservatis extis neque adlapsus serpentium arceri neque fuga impediri potuit. quod quamvis aruspices ad salutem imperatoris pertinere dixissent, Gracchus tamen non cavit ne perfidi hospitis sui Flauī insidiis in eum locum deductus, in quo Poenorum dux Mago cum armata manu delituerat, inermis occideretur."³¹

Here the snakes represent subsequent civil strife and the death of Gracchus.

²⁹ Aeneid, VII, 450-455

³⁰ Aeneid, II, 203-204

³¹ Val. Max., 1.6.8.

Vergil also uses the snake to picture the maimed and the pathetic. It would be difficult to illustrate these concepts better than with a wounded snake. No other animal expresses pain so vividly and graphically. The writhing coils of the wounded snake, as it were, exude pain and project this sensation to the beholder.

There are two snake similes in Vergil that express a vain, pathetic struggle. One of them occurs in Book XI. Tarchon, goaded by Jupiter himself, rushes into the battle, snatches Venulus from his horse and carries him off helplessly. Venulus is compared to a snake.

"utque volans alte raptum cum fulva draconem
fert aquila, implicuitque pedes, atque unguibus haesit;
saucius at serpens sinuosa volumina versat,
arrectisque horret squamis, et sibilat ore,
arduus insurgens; illa haud minus urguet obunco
luctantem rostro; simul aethera verberat alis"³²

The simile is probably based on Homer, Iliad XII, lines 200-207 where the Trojans are about to make an attack on the Greek ships. They behold the following omen:

"
ὄρνις γάρ σφιν ἐπ' ἤλθε περὶ σέμεναι μεμαῶσιν,
λίετος ὑψιπέτης ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ λαὸν ἑργῶν,
φοινήμεντα δράκοντα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον
ζῶον ἔτ' ἀσπαίροντα· καὶ οὐ πῶ λήθετο χάρμης.
κόψε γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔχοντα κατὰ στήθος παρὰ δειρὴν,
ἰδὼν θεὸς ὀπίσω· ὃ δ' ἀπὸ ἔθεν ἤκε χαμᾶζε
ἀλγῆσας ὀδύνησι, μέσῳ δ' ἐνὶ κάββαλ' ὀμίλῳ,
αὐτὸς δὲ κλάγξας πέτετο πνοιῆς ἀνέμοιο"

Vergil describes the snake in much greater detail than Homer. Perhaps the best indication of Vergil's fascination by snakes is his careful detailed description of their appearance and movements.

The other simile occurs in Book V during the famous boatrace. Sergestus' ship presents a sorry spectacle as it limps back to shore after having crashed into the rocks, and it is compared to a snake that has been run over by a wagon.

³² Aeneid, XI, 751-756

"qualis saepe viae deprensus in aggere serpens,
aerea quem obliquum rota transiit, aut gravis ictu
seminecem liquit saxo lacerumque viator;
nequiquam longos fugiens dat corpore tortus,
parte ferox, ardensque oculis, et sibila colla
arduus attollens; pars vulnere clauda retentat
nexantem nodis seque in sua membra plicantem"³³

In both these passages, it is the writhing motion that effects the picture of pathetic helplessness.³⁴ This picture is achieved by words like sinuosa, volumina, versat, in the first, and tortus, nexantem, nodis plicantem, in the second. The vivid picture of the snake's writhing body is further enhanced by the alliteration of sibilants and labials--saucius serpens sinuosa volumina versat--in the first passage and the liquids, sibilants and labials--nexantem nodis seque in sua membra plicantem--in the second. This creates the effect of the motion of the snake. It is further significant that out of the at least four words for snake at his disposal, Vergil chose the word serpens in these two passages. Serpens is derived from the verb serpo meaning to creep, crawl.

In Aeneid Book II, during Troy's night of horror, the serpent plays a most fascinating role. It represents the strength and youthful vigour of Pyrrhus, the most formidable and terrifying of the Greeks. Although he occupies a comparatively small space in the Aeneid, he is one of Vergil's most impressive character portraits. Pyrrhus is inhuman; an abstraction of violence and bloodthirstiness. He kills for the sheer joy of it.

³³ Aeneid, V, 273-279

³⁴ Gislason, Die Naturschilderungen und Naturgleichnisse in Vergils Aeneis, (Diss. Marburg, 1939), p. 126. Gislason feels that Vergil has here related the fate of the serpent with great cold-bloodedness. Such a preposterous view seems to be based on the assumption that the callousness of a writer towards an object described is directly proportional to the amount of detail expended on that description.

His ruthless murder of Polites before the eyes of his parents, Priam and Hecuba, and his subsequent butchering of the old Priam himself earns him this characterization by Aeneas:

"iamque aderit multo Priami de sanguine Pyrrhus,
natum ante ora patris, patrem qui obtruncat ad aras"³⁵

His every movement explodes with energy. The locked doors of Priam's palace do not stop him.

"ipse inter primos correpta dura bipenni
limina perrumpit, postesque a cardine vellit
aeratos; iamque excisa trabe firma cavavit
robora, et ingentem lato dedit ore fenestram"³⁶

He is introduced to us in a brilliant simile,

"vestibulum ante ipsum primoque in limine Pyrrhus
exultat telis et luce coruscus aena
qualis ubi in lucem coluber mala gramina pastus,
frigida sub terra tumidum quem bruma tegebat,
nunc positus novus exuviis nitidusque iuventa,
lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga
arduus ad solem, et linguis micat ore trisulcis."³⁷

The first two lines are so striking that, at first glance, anything further would seem futile and anticlimactic. Vergil, however, manages successfully by comparing him to a snake that has just sloughed off its old skin and emerges in new splendour. Luce coruscus in the first two lines is echoed by in lucem, nitidusque and arduus ad solem. The two predominant images in this simile are light and speed. The sunlight striking the sleek new body of the upraised snake illustrates the gleam of Pyrrhus' weapons; the darting of the snake's tongue illustrates the lightning speed of his movements in action.

³⁵ Aeneid, II, 662-663

³⁶ Ibid., 479-482

³⁷ Ibid., 469-475

The simile's effectiveness is in great part due to Vergil's judicious borrowing and ingenious combining. It is an adaptation from Georgics Book III.

"cum positis novus exuviis nitidusque iuventa
volvitur, aut catulos tectis aut ova relinquens,
arduus ad solem et linguis micat ore trisulcis."³⁸

This is, however, more than a mere taking over of the lines from the Georgics. Vergil has accentuated the brilliant picture of the rejuvenated snake by juxtaposing it with a description of the darkness and cold of its subterranean winter abode. The resultant simile fits the character of Pyrrhus perfectly. In the words of Page,

"The simile serves to bring out the youthful vigour of Pyrrhus, the malignancy of his attack, the exceeding brightness of his appearance."³⁹

Pyrrhus' malignancy is brought out by mala gramina pastus.⁴⁰

A completely different role of the serpent is revealed in Aeneid Book V. Here the snake represents a benevolent force.

Aeneas celebrates funeral games in honour of his father Anchises; approaching the tomb with his followers, he makes this address:

"salve, sancte parens, iterum; salvete, recepti
nequiquam cineres, animaeque umbraeque paternae.
non licuit fines Italos fataliaque arva,
nec tecum Ausonium, quicumque est, quaerere Thybrim."⁴¹

³⁸ Georgics, III, 437-439.

³⁹ T. E. Page, The Aeneid of Vergil, Books I-VI (London, 1955), p. 245.

⁴⁰ The words were probably suggested to Vergil by Iliad, XXII, 94,

"βεβρωκὼς κακὰ φάρμακ'

⁴¹ Aeneid, V, 80-83

At this point a serpent appears.

"dixerat haec, adytis cum lubricus anguis ab imis
septem ingens gyros, septena volumina traxit,
amplexus placide tumulum, lapsusque per aras;
caeruleae cui terga notae, maculosus et auro
squamam incendebat fulgor, ceu nubibus arcus
mille iacit varios adverso sole colores.
obstipuit visu Aeneas: ille agmine longo
tandem inter pateras et levia pocula serpens
libavitque dapes, rursusque innoxius imo
successit tumulo, et depasta altaria liquit"⁴²

The snake here plays a traditional role; it stands for the deceased.
The tasting of the offerings signifies a good omen. The offerings have been
accepted by the deceased through his representative as it were.

Page comments,

"the serpent clearly represents the spirit of the dead,
which a wide-spread primitive belief regards as in-
habiting the tomb, and which by partaking of the offerings
indicates his happy acceptance of them."⁴³

This belief that the serpent represented the soul or spirit of the
dead was widespread in pre-Homeric Greece. It was believed at that time that
demonic and chthonic powers were theriomorphic, and were incorporated as snakes.⁴⁴
From there it was but a small step, according to Küster, to the notion that the
soul of the dead was embodied in the snake, since the soul was conceived of as
continuing its life in the earth.⁴⁵ This view of the role of the snake is
supported by Greek vase paintings and Etruscan tomb reliefs.⁴⁶ Later, a
gradual process of anthropomorphism took place; the deceased was now pictured
in human form, the snake having been relegated to the role of a death symbol
or a guardian of the tomb.⁴⁷

⁴² Ibid., 84-93

⁴³ Page, op. cit., p. 401

⁴⁴ Hartmann, op. cit., p. 516

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 515

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 514

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 516

Although eventually the snake lost its supernatural significance, it never ceased to be regarded with religious fear and awe, especially when it appeared near a tomb or shrine.⁴⁸ The behaviour of Aeneas exemplifies this. Although he does not quite know what the snake represents, he is convinced of its supernatural significance and, therefore, renews his sacrifice. Vergil makes Aeneas uncertain as to the exact meaning of the snake--it is either the guarding spirit of the tomb or the attendant of Anchises.

"incertus, Geniumne loci famulumne parentis"⁴⁹

The snake as the representative of the "genius" or tutelary deity of a place is a Roman concept.⁵⁰ This concept may have arisen from the Roman custom of keeping certain varieties of snakes as household pets.⁵¹ Page quotes Papillon,

"the tutelary deity of places or persons was represented under the form of a serpent (e.g. at Pompeii and in Etruscan tombs); as also was the famulus (δαίμων) or 'familiar' supposed to attend demigods and heroes the predecessor of the black cat of mediaeval witchcraft. Cf. Val. Fl. 3. 457 placidi quas protinus angues, umbrarum famuli linguis rapuere coruscis."⁵²

Page further tells us that,

"In Pompeian houses a serpent is frequently painted near the altar of the Lares, and is said to represent the genius of the master of the house."⁵³

This same concept is stated by Servius in his commentary on this passage.

"Nullus locus sine genio, qui per anguem plerumque ostenditur"⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 517

⁴⁹ Aeneid, V, 95

⁵⁰ Hartmann, op. cit., p. 518

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 518

⁵² Page, op. cit., p. 402

⁵³ Ibid., p. 401

⁵⁴ Servius, op. cit., p. 604

Hartmann seems to feel that Vergil intends the snake here to stand for the soul of Anchises (in accordance with the early Greek philosophy mentioned above), but he has Aeneas see it only as the genium loci or famulum parentis.⁵⁵ According to Hartmann Vergil has in this passage combined the Greek and the Roman concepts.⁵⁶ This is possible but cannot be maintained with certainty. To be sure, Vergil practised such a technique elsewhere. His description of the underworld is a strange mixture of primitive mythology and later philosophies. Nevertheless, the mere fact that a snake appears to Aeneas at the tomb of his father Anchises and that Aeneas believes this snake to be either genium loci or famulum parentis is not sufficient proof that Vergil intended the snake to be the embodiment of the soul of Anchises.

The physical movements of this snake harmonize perfectly with its role as a benevolent power. In contrast with the nervous energy and defiant attitude of the Pyrrhus-snake described above, this one presents a picture of peace and tranquillity. It moves slowly, deliberately, almost languorously. This effect is achieved by several means.

The harmlessness and benevolence of the animal is expressed by the words placide and innoxius. All sudden movements are avoided as implying anger (in contrast to linguis micat ore trisulcis of the Pyrrhus snake). By emphasizing the snake's great length, Vergil gains slowness and deliberateness of movement; the spondees and liquids further accentuate this slowness and smoothness:

"septem ingens gyros, septena volumina traxit,
amplexus placide tumulum, lapsusque per aras"⁵⁷

Not only are all sudden movements avoided, but also all defiant ones such as the arduus ad solem of the previous snake. This one keeps close to the ground.

⁵⁵ Hartmann, op. cit., p. 516

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 519

⁵⁷ Aeneid, V, 85-86

One of the most fascinating and bold views on the symbolism of the snake is propounded by Knox,⁵⁸ who, concentrating specifically on the snakes in Aeneid Book II, contends that the snake images are the basis of a complicated metaphorical structure, a "dominant obsessive" metaphor that illustrates and interprets the plot of Book II, namely the destruction of Troy by the Greeks and its subsequent rebirth.

"The pattern of the metaphor runs parallel to the pattern of events, the plot; but it does more than enforce the impression made by the events, it interprets them. At the emotional climax of the book, the death of Priam, it is in the image of the serpent that the complete meaning of the event is to be seen. And as the pattern of the metaphor unfolds, an independent process of development is revealed; the imagery has, as it were, a plot of its own. In the course of its many appearances in the book the metaphor undergoes a transformation like that of the serpent which it evokes, it casts its old skin. At first suggestive of Greek violence and Trojan doom, it finally announces triumphantly the certainty of Troy's rebirth."⁵⁹

Of the three snake passages in Book II--the death of Laocoon, the comparison of Androgeos to a man who accidentally steps on a snake, the comparison of Pyrrhus to a snake--the first according to Knox is the basis of the subsequent serpent imagery.⁶⁰

Vergil's description of the death of Laocoon and his two sons is one of his greatest descriptive achievements. Laocoon is making a sacrifice when--

"ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta--
horresco referens--immensis orbibus angues
incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad litora tendunt;
pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta iubaeque
sanguineae superant undas; pars cetera pontum
pone legit, sinuantque immensa volumine terga;
fit sonitus spumante salo. iamque arva tenebant,
ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni
sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.

⁵⁸ B. M. W. Knox, "The Serpent and the Flame," A.J.Ph., LXXI (1950).

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 381

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 383

diffugimus visu exsanguis: illi agmine certo
Laocoonta petunt; et primum parva duorum
corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus;
post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem,
corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus; et iam
bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.
ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno;
clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit:
qualis mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram
taurus et incertam excussit cervice securim.
at gemini lapsu delubra ad summa dracones
effugiunt, saevaeque petunt Tritonidis arcem,
sub pedibusque deae, clipeique sub orbe teguntur."⁶¹

Vergil does not for a moment leave us in doubt that these snakes represent evil and destruction. Their description is introduced with a shudder (Horresco referens). Their huge size (immensis orbibus; inmensa volumine), their blazing eyes (ardentes oculos), their bloody crests (iubaeque sanguineae), their hissing mouths (sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora), the foulness with which they bespatter their victims, all contribute to the overall picture of dread that they inspire.

Knox believes that this passage contains in a nutshell all the violent events of the sack of Troy, as well as Troy's subsequent rebirth.⁶² This means that he interprets the serpents as symbols of Troy's destruction-- the wooden horse, Sinon, the flames, the Greeks, and also as the symbols of Troy's rebirth. In that he believes that they are portents of Troy's destruction,⁶³ he subscribes to Henry's theory of the twin snakes outlined above. Knox, however, goes further in his interpretation of the passage than Henry.

⁶¹ Aeneid, II, 203-227

⁶² Knox, op. cit., pp. 383-384

⁶³ An interesting view on the Laocoon passage is found in H. Kleinknecht, Hermes, LXXIX, (1944) pp. 66-111, who shows convincingly that Vergil included the Laocoon episode not for its mythological or story value, but to serve as a characteristically Roman prodigy, of the type found in Livy, signifying tragedy and death.

Knox' first statement that the snakes stand for the Greeks, especially the Atridae⁶⁴ arouses no particular stir. This is clearly implied in the line ecce autem gemini a Tenedo...angues, since the Greek fleet is to come from Tenedos and since the Greek leaders, the Atridae, have been referred to by Vergil as gemini Atridae. Both Servius and Donatus comment on this. Servius says,

"A Tenedo ideo quod significarent naves inde venturas"⁶⁵

Donatus says,

"Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo potuimus hoc signo praevidere manifestam imminere perniciem; significabant enim hostis venturos a Tenedo et maximos duces et geminos."⁶⁶

We must, however, give credit to Knox for drawing our attention to the verbal echoes of the plot of Book II contained in the Laocoon passage. These verbal echoes are designed to remind us of the two snakes and thereby emphasize the serpent-Greeks association.

In describing the Trojan reaction to Laocoon's death, Tum vero tremefacta novus per pectora cunctis insinuat pavor, Vergil by his use of the word insinuat echoes sinuatque immensa volumine terga of the serpents.⁶⁷

Similarly in the description of the wooden horse, both when the Trojans attach wheels to its feet--pedibusque rotarum subiciunt lapsus--and when it enters the city--inlabitur urbi--the words lapsus and inlabitur recall at gemini lapsu...effugiunt.⁶⁸ Vergil has here compared the wooden horse to a serpent stealthily creeping towards its prey.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Knox, op. cit., pp. 382-383

⁶⁵ Servius, op. cit., p. 254

⁶⁶ Donatus, Interpretationes Vergilianae, (Ed. Teubner) p. 176

⁶⁷ Knox, op. cit., p. 384

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 384-385

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 386

Another verbal echo occurs in the description of the sleeping Trojans while the Greek fleet approaches. "sopor fessos complectitur artus" reminisces the death of Laocoon's children.⁷⁰

"...serpens amplexus uterque
implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus"

Similarly in Aeneas' introduction to the account of his dream,

"tempus erat, quo prima quies mortalibus aegris
incipit, et dono divom gratissima serpit"⁷¹

the word serpit is probably, as Knox suggests, an intentional reminder of the snake (serpens); however, it is at the same time a perfectly sensible metaphor illustrating the action of sleep as it creeps over weary mortals, and therefore cannot justifiably be called "violent,"⁷² certainly, it is no more violent than Cicero's phrase,

"serpit nescio quo modo per omnium vitas amicitia."⁷³

When Aeneas awakes, Troy is already in flames. Deiphobus' house ablaze is described thus,

"iam Deiphobi dedit ampla ruinam Vulcano
superante domus."⁷⁴

The words Vulcano superante remind one, according to Knox, of the snakes who tower over Laocoon--superante capite et cervicibus altis.

Knox attempts to connect Sinon with the serpent image, using the lines 135-136 that contain his lying story at the hands of the Greeks, "limosoque lacu per noctem obsuros in ulva delitui...", by pointing out that the name suggest the Latin sinus and sinuo, thereby striking an echo of the serpents who are described as sinuantque immensa volumine terga in line 208. There is no

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 387

⁷¹ Aeneid, II, 268-269

⁷² Knox, op. cit., p. 389

⁷³ Cic., Lael., 23.87

⁷⁴ Aeneid, II, 310-311

doubt that the name must have suggested sinuo to the Roman reader, although it is far more plausible to connect it with the Greek on etymological grounds. When Knox goes on, however, to comment on delitescere as an "uncommon word", he lays himself open to the charge of exaggeration. The fact is that delitescere is not an uncommon word; although it is true that the only other place where Vergil uses it, it applies to the viper, it is used quite "commonly" by other authors, not necessarily referring to serpents. Caesar has

"hostes noctu in silvis delituerant"⁷⁵

and Cicero has

"ut eo mitteret amicos, qui delitescerent,
deinde repente prosilirent."⁷⁶

As mentioned above, Knox interprets the serpents as the symbols of Troy's destruction as well as the symbols of Troy's rebirth.⁷⁷ It is in this latter area that he is treading on somewhat slippery ground. He bases his contention that the serpents represent Troy's rebirth on both the description of the snake to which Pyrrhus is compared and which, by shedding its skin, suggest the process of rebirth, and on the verbal echoes contained in the portent of the flame appearing on the head of Julius that signifies the rebirth of Troy by suggesting that Aeneas and his family flee their old city and establish a new.⁷⁸

"ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli
fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia molles
lambere flamma comas, et circum tempora pasci."⁷⁹

Knox suggests that, since certain words in this passage refer back to snake descriptions, the connection of the serpents with Troy's rebirth is established.

⁷⁵ Caes., B.G., 4.32.4.

⁷⁶ Cic., Cael., 25

⁷⁷ Knox, op. cit., pp. 397-398

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 396

⁷⁹ Aeneid, II, 682-687

He maintains that lambere brings to mind the serpents that attack Laocoon (sibila lambebant linguis); pasci, the snake to which Pyrrhus is compared (mala gramina pastus) as well as the serpents as they feed on Laocoon's children (miseros morsu depascitur artus); innoxia, the serpent which comes out of Anchises' tomb (rursusque innoxius imo successit tumulo); and tactu, the viper in Georgics III line 416 (mala tactu vipera).

These connections are somewhat nebulous and are therefore not strong enough to establish the association between the serpents and the rebirth of Troy. First of all, both innoxia and tactu, used outside of Aeneid Book II and being words not usually associated with serpents, do not establish a strong enough association with "snake" in the mind of the reader. Secondly, pasci and lambere do not necessarily remind one of snakes, since they have been used in connection with fire by other authors as well, the former by Lucretius,

"solis flammam per caeli caerula pasci"⁸⁰

the latter by Horace,

"flamma summum properabat lambere tectum"⁸¹

Vergil himself uses the latter in Aeneid Book III,

"attollitque globos flammarum et sidera lambit"⁸²

Despite these flaws, Knox has given us an insight into the most complex snake symbol in Vergil.

⁸⁰ Lucr., 1.1090

⁸¹ Hor., Sat. 1.5.73.

⁸² Aeneid, III, 374

PART III: OTHER ANIMALS

The Eagle

The eagle is encountered very infrequently in Vergil's works. There are four references, three of them in the Aeneid. Vergil employs two names to refer to the animal, the word aquila and the periphrasis Iovis armiger. From these four references, the eagle emerges as an invincible, destructive force. It is always pictured as being in conflict with others. This conflict takes the form of an attack by the eagle in which it is invariably victorious.

In Eclogue IX, we read that Moeris's poetry has been as effectual in preserving the ownership of his farm as are doves against an eagle's attack:

"audieras et fama fuit; sed carmina tantum
nostra valent, Lycida, tela inter Martia, quantum
Chaonias dicunt aquila veniente columbas."¹

In Aeneid XI, there is a splendid description of an eagle's successfully carrying off a snake:

"utque volans alte raptum cum fulva draconem
fert aquila, implicuitque pedes, atque unguibus haesit;
saucius at serpens sinuosa volumina versat,
arrectisque horret squamis, et sibilat ore,
arduus insurgens; illa haud minus urguit obunco
luctantem rostro; simul aethera verberat alis:"²

Turnus in Aeneid IX, seizes Lycus as an eagle does a hare:

"qualis ubi aut leporem aut candenti corpore cycnum
sustulit alta petens pedibus Iovis armiger uncis,"³

Several passages in the Iliad may have suggested this simile to Vergil⁴

¹ Eclogue, IX, 11-13

² Aeneid, XI, 751-756

³ Aeneid, IX, 563-564

⁴ Iliad, XV, 690; XVII, 674; XXII, 308.

In Aeneid V, Ganymedes' rape by an eagle is described:

" . . . acer, anhelanti similis, quem praepes ab Ida
sublimem pedibus rapuit Iovis armiger uncis."⁵

It is interesting to note that on both occasions where Vergil uses Iovis armiger for aquila, he uses the phrase pedibus uncis.

The Tiger

The tiger, like the eagle, occurs infrequently in Vergil and it is not sharply delineated. It emerges as a large, fierce, and dangerous animal.

In Georgics II, Italy is eulogized as a land where fierce animals are unknown:

"at rabidae tigres absunt et saeva leonum
semina"⁶

Dido in Aeneid IV, exclaims that Aeneas' callous treatment of her can only be explained by his early, harsh environment. Tigers must have suckled him:

" . . . sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanaeque admovent ubera tigres"⁷

The respective powers of Bacchus and Orpheus are illustrated by their ability to subdue tigers. The former accomplished this by wine:

"qui pampineis victor iuga flectit habenis,
Liber, agens celso Nysae de vertice tigres."⁸

the latter by music:

"mulcentem tigres et agentem carmine quercus."⁹

⁵ Aeneid, V, 254-255

⁶ Georgics, II, 151-152

⁷ Aeneid, IV, 366-367

⁸ Aeneid, VI, 804-805

⁹ Georgics, IV, 510

In Eclogue V, Daphnis is eulogized as having accomplished the same feat:

"Daphnis et Armenias curru subiungere tigres
instituit..."¹⁰

The fierceness of Camilla, the warrior maiden, is shown by the fact that, instead of the customary feminine accoutrement, she is dressed in a tiger-skin.

"pro crinali auro, pro longae tegmine pallae,
tigridis exuviae per dorsum a vertice pendent."¹¹

The only simile in Vergil involving a tiger occurs in Book IX, when Turnus, trapped inside the Trojan camp, is compared to a tiger among helpless flocks.

"inmanem veluti pecora inter inertia tigrim"¹²

The Horse

References to horses occur frequently in Vergil. What becomes noticeable at first glance is that Vergil thinks of the animal as gloriously alive; the horse is characterized by fieriness, speed, and a tremendous lust for life.

In Georgics I, Neptune is invoked as follows:

"...tuque o, cui prima frementem
fudit equum magno tellus percussa tridenti"¹³

The young Ascanius evinces great joy while he hunts on a spirited horse.

"At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri
gaudet equo, iamque hos cursu, iam praeterit illos"¹⁴

¹⁰ Eclogue, V, 29-30

¹¹ Aeneid, XI, 576-577

¹² Aeneid, IX, 730

¹³ Georgics, I, 12-13

¹⁴ Aeneid, IV, 156-157

In Aeneid VII, Vergil describes the angry Italians preparing for battle. The horses are caught up in this atmosphere of war:

"hic galeam tectis trepidus rapit; ille frementes
ad iuga cogit equos..."¹⁵

Horses play an integral part in adding colour to the picture of the clash between the Italians and Trojans:

"...fremet aequore toto
insultans sonipes, et pressis pugnat habenis
huc obversus et huc..."¹⁶

"adventusque virum fremitusque ardescit equorum"¹⁷

"...subito erumpunt clamore furentesque
exhortantur equos"¹⁸

The horses that Latinus presents to Aeneas literally exude fieriness.

"absenti Aeneae currum geminosque iugales,
semine ab aetherio, spirantes naribus ignem"¹⁹

The "foaming steed" is a familiar occurrence in the Aeneid. In Book VI, 881 we have:

"seu spumantis equi foderet calcaribus armos"

In Book XI, 770:

"spumantemque agitabat equum..."

In Book XII, 372-373

"obiecit sese ad currum et spumantia frenis
ora citatorum dextra detorsit equorum"

¹⁵ Aeneid, VII, 638-639

¹⁶ Aeneid, XI, 599-601

¹⁷ Ibid., 607

¹⁸ Ibid., 609-610

¹⁹ Aeneid, VII, 280-281

In Book XII, 650-651:

"...medios volat, ecce, per hostes
vectus equo spumante Saces..."

Perhaps the single most vivid line describing a horse occurs in Aeneid Book IV, where Dido's horse is described as it impatiently awaits the start of the hunt:

"stat sonipes, ac frena ferox spumantia mandit"²⁰

As can be seen from the above quotations, the horse's fieriness is shown by such violent words as fremens, furens, spumans, and spirans.

There are two similes involving the horse in the Aeneid. They both admirably show the animal's spirit and joy of life. Turnus' fighting spirit and lightning fury are compared to Mars and his steeds.

"qualis apud gelidi cum flumina concitus Hebri
sanguineus Movors clipeo increpat atque furentes
bella movens inmittit equos; illi aequore aperto
ante Notos Zephyrumque volant; gemit ultima pulsu
Thraca pedum..."²¹

When Turnus puts on his armour to meet the enemy, he is likened to a wild stallion:

"Qualis ubi abruptis fugit praeseptis vinclis
tandem liber equus, campoque potitus aperto
aut ille in pastus armentaque tendit equarum
aut adsuetus aquae perfundi flumine noto
emicat, arrectisque fremit cervicibus alte
luxurians; luduntque iubae per colla, per armos"²²

This simile is closely modelled on one describing Paris in the Iliad.²³

²⁰ Aeneid, IV, 135

²¹ Aeneid, XII, 331-335

²² Aeneid, XI, 492-497

²³ Iliad, VI, 506-511

Vergil's admiration for the horse extends back to Georgics Book III, which deals with the training of domestic animals. There he describes the ideal horse as follows:

"nec non et pecori est idem delectus equino.
tu modo, quos in spem statuas submittere gentis,
praecipuum iam inde a teneris inpende laborem.
continuo pecoris generosi pullus in arvis
altius ingreditur et mollia crura reponit;
primus et ire viam et fluvios temptare minantes
audet, et ignoto sese committere ponti,
nec vanos horret strepitus. illi ardua cervix
argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga,
luxuriatque toris animosum pectus. honesti
spadices glaucique, color deterrimus albis
et gilvo. tum, si qua sonum procul arma dedere,
stare loco nescit, micat auribus et tremit artus,
collectumque fremens volvitur sub naribus ignem.
densa iuba, et dextro iactata recumbit in armo;
at duplex agitur per lumbos spina, cavatque
tellurem et solido graviter sonat ungula cornu.
talis Amyclaei domitus Pollucis habenis
Cyllarus et, quorum Grai meminere poetae,
Martis equi biuges et magni currus Achilli.
talis et ipse iubam cervice effudit equina
coniugis adventu pernix Saturnus, et altum
Pelion hinnitu fugiens inplevit acuto."²⁴

A very interesting description of a horse is found in Aeneid X. The wounded Mezentius has just received news of his son's death. Lausus had previously saved his father's life, and in an effort to avenge his wounds is slain by Aeneas. In a tremendous surge of rage and sorrow Mezentius decides to avenge the death of his son despite his wounds. There follows a unique scene in Vergil. Mezentius addresses his horse.

"...adloquitur maerentem, et talibus inquit:
'Rhaebe, diu, res si qua diu mortalibus ulla est,
viximus. aut hodie victor spolia illa cruenta
et caput Aeneae referes, Lausique dolorum
ultor eris mecum, aut, aperit si nulla viam vis,
occumbes pariter. neque enim, fortissime, credo,
iussa aliena pati et dominos dignabere Teucros."²⁵

²⁴ Georgics, III, 72-94

²⁵ Aeneid, X, 860-866

This is the only example in Vergil of a human being's speaking to an animal. Homer's influence is doubtless here; one thinks of Polyphemus' speaking to his favourite ram. The charm of the speech consists mainly of the spirit of camaraderie in which Mezentius speaks; he addresses the horse as a companion, almost an equal. The horse's response is pictured with sensible restraint. Unlike the implausible tears shed by the horses of Achilles as described in Homer²⁶ (copied by Vergil on another occasion),

"post bellator equus, positus insignibus, Aethon
it lacrimans guttisque umectat grandibus ora."²⁷

the awareness and sorrow of Mezentius' horse is expressed by the one word maerentem.

The Lion

The lion is a favourite animal with Vergil. There are no less than five lion similes in the Aeneid. Vergil's lion is an impressive animal - proud, brave, strong, and fierce. The poet's descriptions testify to his frank admiration of the animal; even when on occasion the lion is forced to retreat, he never turns his back in fear or flight. Accordingly, only great warriors are compared to a lion: Turnus, Mezentius, Nisus.

Thus when Turnus is forced to abandon the Trojan camp, he is compared to a lion;

"...ceus saevum turba leonem
cum telis premit infensis; at territus ille,
asper, acerba tuens, retro redit, et neque terga
ira dare aut virtus patitur, nec tendere contra,
ille quidem hoc cupiens, potis est per tela virosque."²⁸

²⁶ Iliad, XVII, 426-428

²⁷ Aeneid, XI, 89-90

²⁸ Aeneid, IX, 792-796

similarly when he catches sight of the young Pallas, he is likened to a lion.

"...utque leo, specula cum vidit ab alta
stare procul campis meditantem in proelia taurum,
advolat"²⁹

Turnus behaves like a wounded lion upon realizing that the Latins are becoming dissatisfied with his leadership:

"...Poenorum qualis in arvis
saucius ille gravi venantum vulnere pectus
tum demum movet arma leo, gaudetque comantes
excutiens cervice toros, fixumque latronis
inpavidus frangit telum, et fremit ore cruento:"³⁰

Nisus' slaughter of the sleeping Rutulians is compared to the work of a lion in a sheep-fold:

"inpastus ceu plena leo per ovilia turbans--
suadet enim vesana fames--manditque trahitque
molle pecus mutumque metu; fremit ore cruento."³¹

The mighty warrior Mezentius rushes against his foes like a raging lion. When he catches sight of one of his victims, Vergil describes him thus:

"inpastus stabula alta leo ceu saepe peragrans--
suadet enim vesana fames--si forte fugacem
conspexit capream aut surgentem in cornua cervum,
gaudet, hians inmane, comasque arrexit, et haeret
visceribus super accumbens; lavit inproba taeter
ora cruor:"³²

The simile may have been suggested by Iliad III, where Menelaus catches sight of Paris.³³

²⁹ Aeneid, X, 454-456

³⁰ Aeneid, XII, 4-8

³¹ Aeneid, IX, 339-341

³² Aeneid, X, 723-728

³³ Iliad, III, 23-26

The qualities of the lion, mentioned above, are brought out by Vergil's repeated use of words and phrases. Thus gaudet occurs twice and expresses the lion as he exults in his strength; the animal's bloodthirstiness is expressed three times - by the twice-recurring phrase fremit ore cruento, as well as by the words lavit inproba taeter ora cruor.

The Wolf

This is one of the most frequently encountered animals in Vergil; references to the wolf occur all the way from the Eclogues to the Aeneid.

In addition to its primary function mentioned below, the wolf is associated with two superstitions. Both are mentioned in the Eclogues. The first one is a reference to the old belief that a man can be changed into a wolf:

"...ego saepe lupum fieri et se condere silvis
Moerim..."³⁴

The second superstition states that a man would lose his voice if a wolf saw him first. This is found in Eclogue IX. The shepherd Moeris describes his waning poetic powers as follows:

"omnia fert aetas, animum quoque; saepe ego longos
cantando puerum memini me condere soles:
nunc oblita mihi tot carmina; vox quoque Moerim
iam fugit ipsa; lupi Moerim videre priores."³⁵

A reference to the same superstition occurs in Theocritus.³⁶

³⁴ Eclogue, VIII, 97

³⁵ Eclogue, IX, 51-54

³⁶ Theocritus, Idylls, 14.22

The primary image of the wolf, however, is that of a bloodthirsty predator; a robber that represents a threat to the sheep-fold. The idea that the wolf represents the greatest enemy of the flocks was so firmly fixed in Vergil's mind that, with the exception of the superstitions quoted above, whenever the animal is mentioned, it is mentioned almost invariably in connection with sheep.

When Jupiter in Georgics I terminates the Golden Age by assigning the new laws of Nature, he ordains the following role to the wolf,

"praedarique lupos iussit..." 37

The following quotations from the Eclogues and the Georgics illustrate this hunting role. In Eclogue VII, we read:

"hic tantum Boreae curamus frigora, quantum
aut numerum lupo aut torrentia flumina ripas." 38

In Eclogue III we read:

"triste lupo stabulis..." 39

In Eclogue VIII, the jilted shepherd Damon wishes that all the laws of nature might be inverted.

"nunc et oves ultro fugiat lupo..." 40

The shepherd Menalcas, in Eclogue V, relates how all nature rejoiced at the apotheosis of Daphnis.

"nec lupo insidias pecori..." 41

37 Georgics, I, 130

38 Eclogue, VII, 51-52

39 Eclogue, III, 80

40 Eclogue, VIII, 53

41 Eclogue, V, 60

In Georgics IV we read

"auditisque lupos acuunt balatibus agni,"⁴²

In Georgics III, Vergil advises the farmer to keep watchdogs because -

"...numquam custodibus illis
nocturnum stabulis furem incursusque luporum
aut inpacatos a tergo horrebis Hiberos."⁴³

In the same book Vergil pictures the seriousness of a plague by telling us that even the wolf forgot his natural role.

"non lupo insidias explorat ovilia circum
nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat-acrior illum
cura domat..."⁴⁴

The wolf similes in the Aeneid continue the image established in the Eclogues and the Georgics. Thus when Turnus rides around the Trojan camp terrifying the Trojans inside, he is compared to a wolf near a sheepfold.

"ac veluti pleno lupo insidiatus ovili
cum fremit ad caulas, ventos perpessus et imbres,
nocte super media; tuti sub matribus agni
balatum exercent; ille asper et improbus ira
saevit in absentes; collecta fatigat edendi
ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces:"⁴⁵

A new dimension has been added to the wolf. The hunger craze and the desperation adds a new fierceness to the animal. Turnus is again compared to a wolf when he seizes Lycus in battle.

"quaesitum aut matri multis balatibus agnum
Martius a stabulis rapuit lupo..."⁴⁶

⁴² Georgics, IV, 435

⁴³ Georgics, III, 406-408

⁴⁴ Ibid., 537-539

⁴⁵ Aeneid, IX, 59-64

⁴⁶ Ibid., 565-566

After shamefully killing Camilla from behind, Arruns is compared to a wolf -

"ac velut ille, prius quam tela inimica sequantur,
continuo in montes sese avius abdidit altos
occiso pastore lupus magnove iuvenco
conscius audacis facti, caudamque remulcens
subiecit pavitantem utero, silvasque petivit:"⁴⁷

This simile points up the contrast between the lion and the wolf in Vergil. Both are fierce and bloodthirsty. However, while the lion boldly attacks his prey, the wolf operates by stealth. The frequent combination of lupus and insidiae bears this out. The lion retreats without losing his honour; the wolf sometimes hides with his tail between his legs. As mentioned above, only great warriors are compared to the lion. Arruns could never have been compared to a lion. The fact that Turnus is also compared to a wolf is not a contradiction; where he is likened to a wolf, it is done to point up his bloodthirstiness, not cowardice.

⁴⁷ Aeneid, XI, 809-813

PART IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Bull

The immediate and main source of the bull is the Georgics. Thus the simile found in Book XII, lines 103-106 and quoted above that tells of Turnus' and Aeneas' preparation for single combat is based directly on the passage in Georgics III, lines 232-234 that describes a humiliated bull preparing for revenge. Similarly the simile found in Book XII, lines 715-724 that illustrates Turnus' and Aeneas' battle encounter is based on Georgics III, lines 220-223, that describes the fight between two hostile bulls.

According to our evidence, there is next to nothing in Latin literature that could have furnished Vergil with material to be used in his bull descriptions. In Greek literature there was of course Homer--the Aeneid's greatest source. However, upon examination of the bull similes in Homer--there are some half dozen in the Iliad--one finds that there is not one such simile that is directly imitated by Vergil; rather the picture of the bull as it emerges from these Homeric similes has influenced the character of the bull in Vergil, as will be mentioned below.

The most apparent use of the bull is as a representation of Turnus. The parallels between Turnus and the bull are: both have suffered humiliation at the hands of their rivals, and both are seeking revenge. A less obvious but nevertheless provable use of the bull, as shown above, is as a representation of early Italy. Since the bull represents Turnus and Turnus represents Italy in its original power, the bull stands for early Italy. This parallel is further established by the connection *vitalia* = *Italia* explained above. Accordingly, like the early Italians, the bull exemplifies the traditional early virtues of simplicity and strength or hardiness.

The picture of the bull as strength is derived from the Homeric similes in which the animal appears almost invariably as a strong animal.

The bull in its use as an illustration of simplicity and frugality is developed in Georgics III, lines 515-530 during Vergil's eulogy of the dying bull.

In this role that incorporates the qualities of simplicity and hardiness, the bull echoes the Augustan concept of the old virtues. This constitutes the subtlest use of the bull in Vergil--to illustrate and thus to bolster two of Augustus' aims, namely the back to the land movement and the return to the supposed simple and hardy life of the early Romans.

The Snake

There are two chief sources of the snake: the Georgics and Homer. The extensive passage on snakes in Georgics III, lines 414-439 is a veritable treasure chest of snake vocabulary to which most of the snake images in the Aeneid are indebted.

There is not much direct verbal copying of Homeric (snake) descriptions. With the one exception the phrase mala gramina pastus which is a translation of βεβρωκὺς κακὰ φάρμακ' as mentioned above, Homeric snake passages merely suggest starting points to Vergil which then lead off in directions not necessarily the same as those in Homer. Thus, as mentioned above, Aeneid XI, lines 751-756 was suggested by Iliad XII, lines 200-207; Aeneid II, lines 378-381 was possibly suggested by Iliad III, lines 33-35.

The snake's chief use in Vergil is as a symbol of evil. There are three main aspects of this evil. The first one is the hidden snake. As we have seen, the hidden snake as found in the Eclogues and Georgics, and

especially in the simile involving Androgeos represents a source of danger to the unwary. The second aspect is the snake that represents harm and evil. The snake that Allecto hurls at Amata is an example of this. The twin snake as a symbol of death and destruction constitutes the third aspect of the evil snake. The two snakes behind Cleopatra, the twin snakes held up by Allecto, that stand for the Greeks, belong to this category.

In Aeneid Book II, the two snakes that swim across the water from Tenedos and kill Laocoon and his two sons belong to this category of the twin snakes representing death and destruction; however, they are more than discussed above, they represent the murderous Greeks, as well as the destruction of Troy, that is, most of the subsequent events of Book II. It is interesting to note here that with few exceptions, the snake to Vergil is an animal that primarily represents evil. Thus, just as the "wholesome" Italians were symbolized by the bull, so the "evil" Greeks were symbolized by the snake.

The snake, however, also represents a force of good. This occurs in Book V, lines 80-93 where the snake that appears at Anchises' tomb represents his spirit.

There remain two further uses of the snake. In the first the animal illustrates the maimed and the helpless. This picture occurs twice, as mentioned above. Once, when in Book IX Venulus is carried off by Tarchon like a helpless snake by an eagle, and again when Sergestus' ship limps back to shore like a snake that has been crushed by a wagon.

The second use is in direct contrast to the first--the snake represents great strength and vigour. This occurs in Aeneid Book II,

when Pyrrhus, the most terrifying warrior of the Greeks is compared to a snake that emerges with great brilliance after having sloughed off its skin.

The Eagle

The main source of the eagle is Homer. In addition, there is one reference in Eclogues describing the helplessness of doves in the face of an oncoming eagle that may have had some influence; however, of the two similes in the Aeneid, the one in Book IX, lines 563-564 and cited above shows similarities to Iliad, XV, lines 690-692, and the other in Aeneid XI, lines 751-756 is very likely based on Iliad XII, lines 200-207. In view of the fact that similes involving eagles occur quite frequently in Homer, one wonders why they are encountered so seldom in Vergil.

The eagle in Vergil is used to illustrate a strong destructive force. The two similes involving an eagle both describe an attack by an eagle against a hopelessly inferior victim. As mentioned above, the eagle always appears in conflict and invariably emerges victorious from the encounter.

The Tiger

Since the tiger is developed sketchily at best--there is only one short pertinent simile in the Aeneid--it would be difficult to pinpoint Vergil's sources for the animal. Added to this difficulty is the fact that the tiger does not occur in Homer. Mention is made of the animal in the Eclogues and Georgics, but the references are too brief to have served as models for even the short references in the Aeneid.

Vergil uses the tiger to express the fierce and the dangerous.

Thus when Turnus is trapped in the Trojan camp he is likened to a bloodthirsty tiger among the helpless sheep. When Aeneas, despite her entreaties, callously persists in leaving Dido, she tells him that he must have drunk the milk of tigers as an infant.

The Horse

The two sources are the Georgics and Homer. The main sources in the Georgics are the invocation of Neptune found in Book I (quoted above), and the description of the ideal horse in Book III. The indebtedness to Homer, however, is far greater. Of the two similes in the Aeneid, the one in Book XI (quoted above) is almost a translation of Iliad VI, lines 506-511. Furthermore the description of the weeping horse of Pallas found in Aeneid XI, lines 89-90 is modelled on the weeping horses of Patroclus as found in Iliad XVII, lines 426-427; finally the above cited description of the immortal steeds in Aeneid VII is based on Iliad V, lines 268-269.

The Lion

The chief source is Homer. References to lions in the Eclogues and Georgics are both rare and brief--not long enough to have furnished Vergil with any material for the Aeneid. As with the bull and the snake, possible source material in other authors is lacking as far as we know. The influence of the Homeric lion similes is easily discernible. Thus the simile in Aeneid X, lines 723-728 is clearly influenced by Iliad III, lines 23-26 and Iliad XII, line 299. Similarly, a comparison between Aeneid IX, lines 792-796 with Iliad XX, lines 164-173 and Iliad XVII, lines 61-67 reveals similarities. Vergil has not copied any Homeric lion simile outright; however the characteristics of Vergil's lion are very similar to those of Homer's, as will be mentioned below.

Like the lion in Homer, Vergil's animal is invariably proud, strong and fierce. Accordingly, whenever Vergil employs a lion simile he illustrates therewith some great warrior. As mentioned above, only outstanding warriors are compared to a lion. It is, therefore, not surprising that of the five lion similes, three describe the great warrior Turnus.

The Wolf

There are three sources: The Eclogues and Georgics, Homer, and Apollonius of Rhodes. Although there are no extensive passages or similes in the Eclogues and Georgics, the animal's basic characteristic, namely, that of a predator and an enemy of sheep is stated there. There is no departure from this characteristic in the Aeneid. Homer has several wolf similes in which the wolf appears as a bloodthirsty robber; however, there is no instance of Vergil's direct copying of a Homeric simile. One of the wolf similes in the Aeneid is, however, directly indebted to Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica. A comparison of Aeneid IX, lines 59-64 with Argonautica I, lines 1243-1247 shows how closely Vergil has followed Apollonius.

The chief picture represented by the wolf is as a bloodthirsty robber, especially of defenceless sheep. Thus the animal illustrates extreme fierceness and bloodthirstiness. This explains why Turnus, when he attacks a helpless victim, is repeatedly compared to a wolf. The wolf also stands for the cowardly robber. He strikes from behind; as such he illustrates Arruns' Murder of Camilla.

Summary of Animal Metaphors in Vergil

An examination of the animals in Vergil reveals that these are used on various metaphorical levels. We might classify these simply as explicit and implicit parallels. An explicit parallel exists when someone or something is compared directly to an animal. An example of such a parallel occurs in Aeneid XI, lines 492-497 where Turnus, as he rushes down from the citadel to meet the enemy, is likened to a wild stallion galloping towards the meadows. Most of the animal comparisons belong to this category. An implicit parallel exists when the connection to an animal is implied, but not stated outright. Thus the parallel discussed above between the bull and Italy is an implicit or implied one, as is that between the snake in Aeneid II and the Greek destroyers of Troy. An even subtler parallel is created when the bull by representing simplicity and hardiness, serves as **propaganda** for Augustus' moral aims. Somewhat the same purpose is served by the snakes in Aeneid II, where they represent the evil of the Greeks.

By having the bull serve as Augustan propaganda, Vergil is breaking new ground. For the first time in Latin literature there is implicit propaganda of this subtle sort. We can go one step further and say that, as far as is known, this is a new departure in literature.

LIST OF VERGILIAN QUOTATIONS

<u>BUOCLICS</u>	<u>AENEID</u>	<u>AENEID</u> (cont.)
Eclogue III, 80	II, 203-204	VII, 450-455
Eclogue III, 92-93	II, 203-227	VII, 578-579
Eclogue IV, 21-25	II, 268-269	VII, 638-639
Eclogue V, 29-30	II, 310-311	VIII, 105
Eclogue V, 60	II, 355-359	VIII, 178
Eclogue VII, 51-57	II, 378-381	VIII, 359-368
Eclogue VIII, 53	II, 460-475	VIII, 696-697
Eclogue VIII, 97	II, 479-482	IX, 59-64
Eclogue IX, 11-13	II, 662-663	IX, 136-138
Eclogue IX, 51-54	II, 682-687	IX, 339-341
	III, 163-166	IX, 563-564
<u>GEORGICS</u>	III, 374	IX, 563-566
I, 12-13	IV, 135	IX, 565-566
I, 130	IV, 156-157	IX, 603-613
II, 151-152	IV, 366-367	IX, 730
III, 72-94	V, 80-83	IX, 792-796
III, 212-241	V, 85-86	X, 454-456
III, 406-408	V, 95	X, 723-728
III, 416-420	V, 254-255	X, 860-866
III, 435-436	V, 273-279	XI, 89-90
III, 437-439	V, 728-731	XI, 492-497
III, 515	VI, 804-805	XI, 576-577
III, 525-530	VII, 52-55	XI, 599-601
III, 537-539	VII, 280-281	XI, 607
IV, 435	VII, 329	XI, 609-610
IV, 456-458	VII, 346-355	XI, 751-755
IV, 510	VII, 346-375	XI, 751-756

AENEID (cont.)

XI, 809-813

XII, 4-8

XII, 103-106

XII, 331-335

XII, 715-724

XII, 720

BIBLIOGRAPHY

REFERENCE WORKS

Oxford Classical Dictionary; Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1949.

Thesaurus Linguae Latinae; Teubner, Leipzig, 1900.

Hadas, M., A History of Latin Literature; Columbia University Press, London. 1962.

Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary; Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1958.

Merguet, H., Lexicon zu Vergilius; Georg Olms, Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hildesheim. 1960.

Rose, H. J., A Handbook of Latin Literature; Methuen and Co. Lt., London. 1936.

Schanz-Hosius, Geschichte der Römischen Literatur; C. H. Beck'sche, Verlagsbuchhandlung, München. 1927.

JOURNALS

Hermes

American Journal of Philology

ANCIENT WORKS

Apollonius of Rhodes, Argonautica; W. Heinemann Ltd., London. 1912.

Aristotle, Politics; W. Heinemann Ltd., London. 1932.

Caesar, Gallic War Book IV, (Ed. by E. S. Shuckburgh); University Press, Cambridge. 1953.

Cicero, De Divinatione; Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt. 1963.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities; W. Heinemann Ltd., London. 1937.

Donatus, Interpretationes Vergilianae; (Ed Teubner), Leipzig. 1905.

Homer, Opera; Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1951.

Horace, Works; Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1947.

Hyginus, Myths (transl. by M. Grant); University of Kansas Press, Lawrence. 1960.

Livy, Ab Urbe Condita; Teubner, Stuttgart. 1959.

- Lucretius, De Rerum Natura; American Book Company, New York. 1907.
- Pliny, Natural History; W. Heinemann Ltd., London. 1938.
- Servius, In Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica Commentarii; Teubner, Leipzig. 1878.
- Servius, In Vergilii Carmina Commentarii; Teubner, Leipzig. 1881.
- Theocritus, Idylls; G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., London. 1930.
- Valerius Maximus, Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium (ed. C. Kempf); Teubner, Leipzig. 1888.
- Vergil, Bucolics and Georgics (Ed. by T. E. Page); MacMillan and Co., London. 1957.
- Vergil, The Aeneid, Books I-VI (Ed. T. E. Page); MacMillan and Co., London. 1955.
- Vergil, The Aeneid, Books VII-XII (Ed. T. E. Page); MacMillan and Co., London. 1956.

MODERN WORKS

- Altheim, F., A History of Roman Religion, (trans. by H. Mattingly); Methuen and Co., Ltd., London. 1938.
- Frank, T., Vergil; Russell and Russell, New York. 1965.
- Gislason, Die Naturschilderungen und Naturgleichnisse in Vergil's Aeneis; Diss. Marburg. 1939.
- Henry, J., Aeneidea; University Press, Dublin. 1889.
- Hermansen, S., Studien über den Italischen und den Römischen Mars; Gyldendal, Copenhagen. 1940.
- Otis, B., Virgil; Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1963.
- Prescott, H. W., The Development of Virgil's Art; University of Chicago Press; Chicago. 1927.
- Pöschl, V., The Art of Vergil, (trans. by G. Seligson); University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor. 1962.
- Rand, E. K., The Magical Art of Virgil; Harvard University Press, Cambridge. 1931.
- Saunders, C., Vergil's Primitive Italy; Oxford University Press, London. 1930.
- Sydenham, E. A., Roman Republican Coinage; Spink and Son, Ltd., London. 1952.
- Wege zu Vergil, (Ed. H. Oppermann); Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt. 1963.

B29839